Tea Party Mobilization and Power Devaluation

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This article empirically tests Power Devaluation Theory on the American Tea Party movement, a contemporary right-wing nationalistic movement motivated by identity politics. The relationship between Tea Party mobilization and power devaluation in economic, political, and status-based markets is examined through a logistic regression analysis that utilizes data from open-source materials and official sources. The analysis partially supports Power Devaluation Theory, finding that specific demographic and theoretical variables that measure potential pools of Tea Party supporters have the ability to significantly predict the odds of mobilization in the direction hypothesized by the theory.

This article focuses on the American Tea Party movement (TPM) that, as we discuss, is usually categorized as a right-wing nationalistic movement that works to protect the more advantaged segments of society. Researchers have offered varying explanations for the TPM's mobilization, including that of a social movement whose identity and motivation focuses on the preservation of ''traditional'' values and national identity (Langman 2012; Zeskind 2012). Others argue that levels of education and educational segregation have the ability to explain TPM mobilization (McVeigh, Beyerlein, Vann Jr., and Trivedi 2014). In one study, Banerjee (2013) found evidence that media coverage of the TPM helped to explain subsequent mobilization.

Importantly, this study adds to a growing body of empirical research on the TPM. We extend and complement the prior work of journalistic profiles (e.g., Rasmussen and Schoen 2010; Lepore 2010; Zernike 2010) and qualitative research on the movement (e.g., Berlet 2012; Langman 2012; Lundskow 2012). Interest in the TPM is not surprising as the movement's mobilization has been associated with the Republican takeover of the House of Representatives in the 2010 congressional elections and the subsequent focus on reducing government spending to lower the U.S. deficit (Courser 2011; Karpowitz, Monson, Patterson, and Pope 2011).

The TPM emerged soon after Barack Obama was sworn in as the President of the United States in early 2009. Several months later, on April 15, federal tax day, TPM supporters rallied

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locally across the country in reaction to the recession and alleged irresponsible government fiscal policies (Rasmussen and Schoen 2010). During the next year, the TPM mobilized to demand tax reform, a reduction in government spending, and the dismissal of a universal healthcare bill. By April 15, 2010, the TPM was a force in American politics, impacting elections and policy on a national scale (Madestam, Shoag, Veuger, and Yanagizawa-Drott 2013).

Building on this prior research, we examine whether Power Devaluation Theory (PDT) can explain TPM mobilization. McVeigh (1999, 2001, 2009) developed PDT as a general theory of right-wing movement mobilization. PDT states that right-wing movements mobilize when their power in political, cultural, and status-based markets are devalued. Empirical tests of PDT have examined the mobilization of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the United States in the 1920s using Klan membership, political support, and activity as explanatory measures. These results demonstrated that political and economic devaluation explains variation in both state and county membership levels (McVeigh 1999). By incorporating aspects of status politics and political mediation theory into PDT, a subsequent study explained variation in political support of the KKK at the 1924 Democratic National Convention (McVeigh 2001). The most recent test also supported aspects of PDT when measures of political, economic, and status-based devaluation were used to examine state levels of Klan activity (McVeigh 2009). Although McVeigh and colleagues have studied the TPM movement (McVeigh et al. 2014), they have not yet done so through the theoretical constructs of PDT.

Our study is unique in two respects. First, it tests PDT on a contemporary right-wing social movement, the American Tea Party movement. Second, we operationalize the key components of PDT using variables not available in prior analyses. Specifically, our model includes data that measure the impact of social discourse on TPM mobilization through the perceived devaluation of power in economic, political, and status-based markets.

POWER DEVALUATION THEORY (PDT)

PDT Theory extends major social movement models like Political Process (McAdam 1982), Resource Mobilization (Oberschall 1973; McCarthy and Zald 1977), and Framing (Goffman 1974; Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford 1986), to specifically account for right-wing movements. Historically, social movement scholars focused mostly on progressive movements (Edelman 2001; Blee 2007; Gross, Medvetz, and Russell 2011). When right-wing movements were studied, social movement scholars usually relied on classical school approaches like status anxiety theories (Bell 1963; Gusfield 1963; Hofstadter 1965; Lipset and Raab 1977). These models categorized the supporters of far-right movements as paranoid persons with irrational beliefs (such as conspiracy theories) whose perceived lack of coherent motivations could be easily dismissed. Instead of taking seriously these movements' grievances and worldviews, status anxiety theories claimed that far-rightists turned to these extreme movements and beliefs to assuage their fears. Far-right supporters were said to be reacting to anxieties that were manifested by the alleged threat of the rising status and power of minority groups that subscribed to different cultural values (Page and Clelland 1978). In other words, a group declines in status when its values, which used to be the dominant belief system, become less popular in society. This loss in status creates anxiety in the groups' members who then turn to far-right movements in an attempt to manage their stress.

In the last few decades though, theorists who rejected the idea that far-rightists were irrational actors began using theories historically applied to left-wing movements to study far-right movements (Chermak 2002; Diamond 1995; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Freilich 2003; Freilich and Pridemore 2005; Simi and Futrell 2009, 2010). Also attempting to explain far-right mobilization, Caiani and Parenti (2013) point out that the United States offers specific political and cultural opportunities that affect the far-right's ability to mobilize. For example, far-right political movements such as the TPM increase the likelihood of successful mobilization when they can connect with political allies or organizations that share, at least in part, similar ideas. These opportunities to ally with other groups and organizations, however, are not constant and their variation across temporal and geographic locations may have the ability to explain far-right mobilization.

McVeigh (1999, 2009) argued that contemporary theories such as resource-mobilization theory and political opportunity theory could not explain why KKK mobilization did not occur before the time period under study, as resources and opportunities were also available prior to mobilization. The claimed inability of these theories to explain right-wing mobilization resulted in the development of PDT, which posits that individuals and groups have ''power'' in a society based on what they can offer in the economic, political, and status-based markets. For example, in the political market, individuals and their demographic groups exchange their ability to vote and contribute to campaigns for political representation. The economic market might include an individual's ability to offer labor related skills, the material possessions they manufacture or own, and specific services they can offer. The status market is where ''individuals and groups offer certain behaviors, traits, cultural knowledge, and tastes in exchange for esteem from others''[1] (McVeigh 2009:41).

Power devaluation alone, however, is not sufficient in itself to act as a catalyst for mobilization (McVeigh 2001). A movement must communicate to its potential pool of supporters what devalues their power, as well as reasonable approaches to ending the devaluation. This process depends on how these issues are framed by movement leaders and the media (McVeigh 2004). This extension of PDT to include components of framing theory builds on prior research (see, e.g., Goffman 1974; Snow et al. 1986; Gamson and Meyer 1996; Benford and Snow 2000; Chong and Druckman 2007). These frames guide and restrict the public discourse on a topic and determine the tools the public will acquire to analyze a situation (Altheide 2002). Diagnostic frames identify the problem and prognostic frames offer solutions (Sasson 1995). If the diagnostic and prognostic frames produced by the TPM are reflective of the perceived reality in which a potential supporter lives, mobilization becomes more likely. It is through these processes that PDT is hypothesized to explain right-wing mobilization.

Research on PDT has focused on the mobilization of the KKK in the United States in the 1920s. During this time period, demographic, economic, and political shifts across the country were framed as having the potential to decrease the influence of white, native-born, Protestants. Thus, geographic regions with relatively large populations of these individuals were more likely to be mobilized. In addition to the demographics of supporters, researchers measured the percentage of students attending public school during this period (McVeigh 2009). The KKK advocated for public schools because they viewed private schools as a pathway for individuals who

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[1]PDT converges with the classical status anxiety theories in highlighting that certain persons perceived loss of their group's status and cultural values in society play a role in far-right mobilization. Importantly, PDT extends the status theories, as well as other backlash theories, by also focusing on these groups loss of power in the markets of politics and economics (Blalok 1967; Estep 2013; Freilich 2003; McVeigh 2009).

were not white, native-born, and/or Protestant to obtain an education. States with higher percentages of students in public school meant larger pools of individuals who should potentially support the KKK's public school agenda. These concepts of political, economic and status-based power markets have been measured using multivariate statistical analyses and have supported PDT (McVeigh 1999, 2001, 2009).

As discussed, the TPM has captured support from people affected by events contemporaneous to their mobilization (e.g., the recession; universal healthcare) in different ways compared to non-TPM supporters. Some people benefit from increased government spending and are thus less likely to be concerned about the nation's debt. Others perceive that they will not directly benefit from new government spending and strongly oppose it. Those with healthcare, receive no tangible benefit if legislation provides it to others. Therefore, PDT should explain how these dynamics account for county-level variation of the TPM's mobilization, which is discussed below.

THE AMERICAN TEA PARTY – A CONTEMPORARY RIGHT-WING MOVEMENT

The emergence of the TPM has been linked to the actions of Rick Santelli, a news analyst for CNBC (Courser 2010; Goldstein 2011; Williamson, Skocpol and Coggin 2011). While reporting from the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade on February 19, 2009, Santelli called for a tea-party revolt against government spending and President Obama's stimulus plan (CNBC 2009). Within a week, ''tea parties'' were planned across the country (Pickel 2009; Tribune-Review 2009; Van Susteren 2009). New organizations such as the Tea Party Patriots and Tea Party Express were created. A grassroots movement developed both at the local level and online, where ideas and information were exchanged. Although at times funding came from organizations at the national level (Skocpol and Williamson 2012), no national leader rose to represent the movement and most groups were led by members of their own communities (Etzioni 2011; Levinson 2011; Barnett 2011).

We located three surveys conducted before April 15, 2010 that included questions meant to identify supporters of the TPM movement and those who engaged in TPM activities.[2] A *New York Times*/CBS News survey (2010) estimated that self-identified supporters of the TPM comprised 18% of the population. A CNN (2010) survey by the Opinion Research Corporation found that 12% of those surveyed had given money to TPM organization, attended a rally, or actively supported the movement through e-mail or the Internet. Finally, Ansolabehere and Persily (2010a, 2010b) conducted a survey on constitutional attitudes, polling individuals connected to the TPM.

Across all surveys, TPM supporters were more likely to be white, Republican, conservative, more educated, have higher incomes, and were slightly older. In the NYT/CBS News poll (2010), TPM supporters most favored reducing the size of the federal government, while other issues of concern included the budget deficit, taxation, illegal immigration, and healthcare. These surveys are useful in typifying TPM supporters and measuring the likelihood of mobilization.

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[2]Although each survey used different sampling methodologies, all were national samples. The *New York Times*/CBS News survey (2010) reported an *N* of 1,580, with 881 participants being TPM supports. CNN (2010) surveyed 1,023 adults and estimated the margin of sampling error at ±3 percentage points. Ansolabehere and Persily surveyed 1,198 respondents and reported more information than the prior two about their sampling methodology, all of which can be accessed in their reports (2010a, 2010b).

Although demographics alone do not make a movement right-wing, and there is no agreed upon definition of the far-right,[3] McVeigh (2009:38) defines a ''right-wing movement as a social movement that acts to preserve, restore, or expand rights and privileges of a relatively advantaged societal group'' (see also Cunningham 2012, 2013). McVeigh's definition of the far-right includes two components: (1) the movement seeks to preserve, restore, or expand the rights and privileges of its supporters; and (2) its supporters come from more advantaged segments of society.

The TPM meets these criteria. First, it seeks to preserve the rights of its supporters (Frasner and Freeman 2010). One observer concluded that, ''TPM supporters believe that the nation is facing a crisis because it has abandoned the Constitution, and they seek to restore the government to what they believe are its foundational principles'' (Goldstein 2011:288). Similarly, a journalist wrote that ''what tea parties represent is a revival of good, old-fashioned constitutionalism and the idea that government needs to get back to basics. There is a great yearning for a return to first principles. Millions of Americans . . . would very much like to restore the principles of the American Founding Fathers to their rightful and pre-eminent place in our political life'' (Boychuk 2010). Other news outlets reported that the TPM wanted to return to a time when the constitution was not interpreted in ways that devalued their political, economic, and status-based powers (Zernike 2010).

The TPM also meets the second criteria of a right-wing movement. Its supporters are advantaged. Results from the three surveys demonstrate that TPM supporters are more educated and have higher incomes compared to others. Building on the demographic profiles, scholars believe that ''Almost entirely white, and disproportionately male and older, TPM advocates express a visceral anger at the cultural and, to some extent, political eclipse of an America in which people who looked and thought like them were dominant'' (Frasner and Freeman 2010:81; see also Goldstein 2011). Based on comments made by TPM supporters, and the demographics of the movement, we conclude that the TPM meets the PDT's definition of a right-wing movement.

FRAMES AND TPM DISCOURSE

For mobilization to occur, a right-wing movement must communicate its concerns, and solutions to these concerns, to potential supporters. A collection of newspaper articles, transcripts, and blogs published between February 19, 2009 and April 15, 2010 identified three major reoccurring concerns or diagnostic frames – healthcare, the stimulus plan, and immigration.[4] There was one primary solution or prognostic frame – a mass mobilization of disenfranchised Americans to elect politicians that represented the people. These representatives would then enact tax reform, debt reduction policies, and limit the role of government.

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[3]For example, Blee and Creasap (2010) point out that definitions specific to the far-right, right-wing and conservatism vary across cultures, but also within academic research. They differentiate right-wing and conservative moments, listing examples of each. In the United States, they identify the New Right, which began in the 1970s, as an example of a conservative moment, and the Ku Klux Klan and Christian Identity as examples of right-wing movements.

[4]These materials were found using LexisNexis Academic and conducting a keyword search for the phrase ''tea party'' and requesting news materials published within the stated dates. This search resulted in the identification of thousands of articles across hundreds of sources.

The first diagnostic frame presented relates to excessive government spending and its byproduct, increased taxation. Barnett (2011:282) argues that ''the TPM movement is about two big subjects: first, the undeniable recent surge in national government spending and debt, and second, what Tea Partiers perceive as a federal government that has greatly exceeded its constitutional powers.'' Prior to the emergence of the TPM, two pieces of federal legislation meant to ''bailout'' weakening sectors of the American economy were enacted. President George W. Bush signed the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (H.R. 3221) into law on July 30, 2008. Soon after, he also signed the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, or TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program; H.R. 1424). Both pieces of legislation, along with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1), or the ''stimulus plan,'' focused on correcting the economic downturn caused, at least in part, by a subprime mortgage crisis and a failing auto industry.

The TPM, however, framed these pieces of legislation as an abuse of federal authority. In many ways, they were the economic impetus to mobilization (Barnett 2011). The NYT/CBS poll (2010) captured the disapproval of TPM supporters, who more often identified the budget deficit and government as the country's most important problems. They were also more likely to disapprove of how President Obama was handling the deficit and how their congressperson was doing their job. They disproportionately believed that the economy was poor, but that the Wall Street bailout was unnecessary because the economy would improve without government interference. These views were reflected in the media framing of the TPM events during its first year of existence. ''Across the country, the ''tea party'' movement is spreading. Anti-stimulus protests in Arizona, Washington State, Kansas, Georgia, and elsewhere are popping up'' a journalist observed in February 2009 (*Lone Star Times*). On MSNBC (2009), while interviewing the co-founder of an online, conservative community, a pundit reflected on the movement's motivations, stating that ''You're not just talking about the mortgage bailout; you're upset about the stimulus, obviously, the auto bailout, the Wall Street bailout.'' The interviewee responded, ''We're for the return to limited government in the United States and individual responsibility.''

Directly tied to the passage of the legislation was the belief that using federal funds to pay for the programs would inevitably raise taxes (Wereschagin 2009). The perceived possibility of economic devaluation of certain segments of society caused TPM supporters to focus their attention on a government function that decreases their fiscal standing by taking a portion of their money. Others were concerned about who and what that money was spent on. ''Washington is taking our hard-earned wealth and redistributing it to others; punishing those who practice responsible financial behavior, rewarding those who do not; abandoning free market principles; and putting future generations in debt,'' a TPM supporter stated (Marketwire 2009). The bank, mortgage, and auto bailouts, along with the stimulus package, were part of a fiscal policy of which the TPM disagreed. The idea that taxpayers, who were already suffering economically, would subsidize individuals and organizations that made poor decisions and failed because they overextended their credit angered many. TPM supporters concluded that their tax money was used recklessly and these legislative acts would redistribute wealth to those who had failed, punishing those who succeeded.

If anger at stimulus and bailout spending was focused on two presidential administrations, the TPM's ire for universal healthcare legislation (The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; H.R. 3590) was focused solely on President Obama. The framing of the healthcare debate, like the debate around the stimulus plan, centered around the cost to taxpayers, redistribution of wealth, and the continual encroachment of government regulation into citizens' lives. Indeed,

they were all framed as one issue under the TPM platform. ''We've got to put the brakes on government and get them to stop passing any more bills: the bailouts and the stimulus package and the bailout of the auto industry, and now we have the health-care bill,'' a speaker said at a TPM rally (Alba 2009). A supporter at another event stated, ''The reasons I got involved are I'm against socialized healthcare, the government taking over of private industries, socialism, and spreading the wealth'' (Hollman 2009). TPM supporters also worried ''about (the healthcare bill's) estimated $1 trillion cost over 10 years and how it will be paid for'' (Tam 2009). Even more specific, and more telling when framed though PDT, was this statement by an opponent of the healthcare bill that ''By and large we're all very concerned about the amount of money being pulled out of Medicare . . . to fund putting these additional people into the healthcare system'' (Chumley 2009). Another individual stated that the act was ''about the destruction of the constitutional republic we've lived in for the past two hundred or so years. It's about socialism, not healthcare'' (Roper 2009).

The TPM's focus on dismantling the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was not successfully as it was passed in the Senate and the House even though all Republicans and some Democrats voted against it (THOMAS 2010). TPM supporters resented the legislation and rallied the following month on Tax Day. Reporting on April 15, 2010, Zernike and Thee-Brenan wrote that when ''Asked what they are angry about, TPM supporters offered three main concerns: the recent healthcare overhaul, government spending and a feeling that their opinions are not represented in Washington.''

Social issues were usually not at the forefront of the TPM during the time period under focus (Barnett 2011). Frasner and Freeman (2010:81), however, argue that ''though the anti-immigration and tea party movements so far have remained largely distinct (even if with growing ties), they share an emotional grammar: the fear of displacement.'' According to NYT/CBS News (2010), TPM supporters disproportionately believed that illegal immigration was a very serious problem for the country compared to non-TPM supporters (82% to 60%, respectively). Similarly, 63% of TPM supporters believed that current levels of immigration should be decreased, when only 45% of non-supporters believed the same (Ansolabehere and Persily, 2010a; see also Parker 2011). In November of 2009, the TPM and other groups concerned with immigration policy held events around the country to oppose amnesty legislation (Eviatar 2009). In February 2010, Tom Tancredo, a politician with hardline immigration views, headlined the TPM's first national conference (Koppelman 2010). In an argument reflective of PDT, ''Tancredo explained to Tea Partiers that Democrats wanted immigration reform in order to enfranchise millions of new voters to put them in perpetual power'' (Weigel 2010). Williamson and colleagues (2011) found that TPM supporters feared that progressive immigration policy would create new voting blocks, potentially devaluing their political power.

As with the other themes that appear to be cornerstone concerns of the TPM during its first year of existence, immigration was framed both by the national organization and local chapters, albeit to varying degrees. These frames portray the problem as illegal immigrants who take jobs from Americans and are recipients of government sponsored welfare programs. In addition, if granted citizenship, illegals would increase the voter pool, devaluing the political power of those with citizenship. The TPM's solution was to mobilize against federal policies that granted amnesty and to support legislation that targeted illegal immigrants.

Taken together, these diagnostic frames surrounding stimulus legislation, universal healthcare, and immigration indicate that a specific demographic is more likely than others to mobilize

against perceived threats to their economic, political, and status-based powers. In other words, not only should larger pools of white, educated, and relatively well-off individuals increase the chance of TPM mobilization, but so should larger pools of individuals whose personal situations allow them to relate to the national issues identified by the TPM as problems in need of a solution. The operationalization of these PDT constructs and their hypothesized outcomes are outlined in the following section.

DATA AND METHODS

This article's analysis examines whether predictor variables based on PDT can explain the mobilization of a modern far-right movement. Our dependent variable measures mobilization by identifying counties or county equivalents in the 48 contiguous states where a TPM event occurred on April 15, 2010. Although the TPM movement has coalesced around several issues, the anti-tax message is most prevalent. The dependent variable captures the movement at the apex of its ability to organize its members around a single issue—the day federal taxes are due. This unprecedented number of local demonstrations by an anti-tax movement, paired with the fact that it was the TPM's one-year anniversary, increased the odds that its rallies would be covered by local and/or national media outlets. We created our dependent variable by searching for evidence of an event within five sources. If an event was identified, the county in which it occurred was coded as having had evidence of TPM mobilization. The five sources included three media databases (LexisNexis, Westlaw Campus, and NewsLibrary) that index thousands of sources and two TPM websites (http://www.teapartypatriots.org/ and http://teapartypatriots. ning.com/). These two websites were chosen because, at the time of data collection, they were the only two nationally networked websites that allowed TPM-affiliated groups to post information on upcoming events.

For the media databases, the phrase ''tea party'' was used to search for materials published between April 14 and April 16, 2010. The two websites searched were social networking websites frequented by members and organizers of the TPM to advertise local events, access related news articles, and connect with other movement supporters. Both websites had event calendars that could be searched by members of the websites. These were used to identify events planned for April 15, 2010.[5] For a county to be coded as hosting a TPM event, geographically specific information must have been mentioned in one of the five sources. The dependent variable combines the information from all five sources into one variable that measures whether or not evidence was found that a TPM event occurred on April 15, 2010. Table 1 demonstrates the distribution of the dependent variable across sources. In all, 627 counties were identified as having a mobilizing event occurring within their boundaries, while the remaining 2,481 counties or county equivalents did not.

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[5]There is a large range in the number of identified events between sources, ranging from 2.1 per cent of counties hosting an event for one TPM website compared to 14.5 per cent for the other website. The three news databases, however, only ranged from 7.6 per cent of counties to 12.0 per cent of counties. This variance is most likely related to the number of sources each database indexed. The purpose of multiple sources for identifying TPM events, however, was not to validate each other; instead, it was to increase the probability that as many events as possible were identified and coded. Prior research on open-source data has demonstrated the importance of using multiple sources and types when attempting to identify a population of interest (see e.g., Chermak, Freilich, Parkin, and Lynch, 2012; Freilich et al. 2014).

TABLE 1
Frequency & Percentage of Mobilized Counties Across Sources

Mobilized	TPPWEB1	TPPWEB2	Lexis Nexis	West Law	News Library	All Sources
Yes	65 (2.1%)	450 (14.5)	236 (7.6)	276 (8.9)	372 (12.0)	627 (20.2)
No	3043 (97.9%)	2658 (85.5)	2872 (92.4)	2832 (91.1)	2736 (88.0)	2481 (79.8)

Note. TPPWEB1 represents data from http://www.teapartypatriots.org/ and TPPWEB2 represents data from http://teapartypatriots.ning.com/.

The independent variables are based on measures that have the potential to quantify the population of TPM supporters in each county and are grouped into three areas – demographic attributes of TPM supporters, PDT measures that relate to the concerns framed by the TPM, and control variables. The hypothesized relationship between the independent variable and

TABLE 2
Research Hypotheses

Attributes of Tea Party (TP) Supporters

H_1 Increases in the percent of the population that fit demographic attributes tied to TP supporters will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{1.1}$ Increases in the percent of the population that is white non-Hispanic will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{1.2}$ Increases in the percent of the population that vote Republican will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{1.3}$ Increases in the percent of the population that is over the age of 45 will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{1.4}$ Increases in the percent of the population that has a bachelor's degree or higher will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{1.5}$ Increases in the household median income will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{1.6}$ H6. Increases in the percent of the population that is unemployed will decrease the odds of TP mobilization in a county

Power Devaluation Measurements

H_2 Increases in the percent of the population that support the TP's agenda based on the impact of the identified frames will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.1}$ Increases in the percent of the population that has no health insurance will decrease the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.2}$ Increases in taxation will decrease the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.3}$ Increases in the percent change in taxation over the last ten years will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.4}$ Increases in the percent of the population that is Hispanic will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.5}$ Increases in the change of the population that is Hispanic will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.6}$ Increases in the number of housing units owned by the tenant will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county.

$H_{2.7}$ Increases in the percent change in the number of housing units owned by the tenant over the last ten years will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.8}$ Increases in the percent of congresspersons representing TP interests will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

$H_{2.9}$ Increases in the percent of senators representing TP interests will increase the odds of TP mobilization in a county

TPM mobilization are presented in Table 2. McVeigh (2009) warns that there is not always a clear distinction between the theoretical constructs and variables used to measure them. Therefore, although a senator's voting pattern might reflect concerns of political PDT, the bills on which they are voting might also represent TPM concerns tied to status and economic PDT. Due to this, the predictors related to political, economic, and status-based PDT are grouped into one category.

Predictors that attempt to measure potential populations of TPM supporters are based on the results of the aforementioned surveys and polls that identified individuals who either belonged to, or were supportive of, the movement as being disproportionately white, Republican, older, more educated, and employed in higher income jobs. In an attempt to identify counties with higher proportions of these individuals, data was collected on the percent white non-Hispanic, percent voting Republican in 2008, percent over 45 years of age, percent with a bachelor's degree or higher, the median household income, and the unemployment rate. Based on PDT, it is hypothesized that counties with larger populations of these individuals will be more likely to mobilize as this pool of individuals has disproportionately supported the movement. Except for the per cent voting Republican in the 2008 presidential election, all data for these variables comes from U.S. census estimates and projections released by Geolytics (http://www.geolytics.com/) for the year 2010. The voting data was collected and released through http://www.uselectionatlas.org.

The second group of predictor variables attempts to measure the concerns framed by TPM activists and supporters in the media. As previously discussed, the TPM was concerned with policies that they believed would result in higher taxation and government spending. These issues included the economic stimulus plan, the subprime mortgage bailout, and universal healthcare. To some extent, immigration was framed as a social issue that should fall under the TPM platform. PDT predicts that variables that measure how much of each county's population might gain or maintain economic, political, or status-based powers from the TPM's stance on these issues should have the ability to predict mobilization. The first example is the TPM movement's concern with legislation passed that provides universal healthcare to Americans. One would usually not expect that a person who receives healthcare coverage from the legislation to mobilize against it. It is therefore expected that counties where more individuals were already covered by healthcare will be more likely to mobilize in support of the TPM movement. Although county-level data on healthcare is rare, data was found that measured the per cent of the population under nineteen that did not have healthcare insurance in each county as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. It is hypothesized that the larger the number uninsured in a county, the smaller the proportion of individuals who would support the TPM, and therefore the lower the odds of mobilization occurring.

Next, we introduce two variables to estimate levels of taxation paid in each county. The first is the average property tax paid in 2010, measured as the percent of the value of one's home. The second is the percent change in that value between 2001 and 2010. Data for both variables comes from the U.S. Census estimates and projections. For the first variable, we hypothesize that counties with lower tax rates will have higher proportions of individuals who support the TPM movement. Increases in those tax rates over the ten-year period, however, should increase the odds of the TPM mobilizing in a county. It is hypothesized that counties with relatively low tax rates will have larger pools of individuals who support the TPM movement and increases in those rates will make the tax issue more salient in their minds, increasing the likelihood of mobilization. In a similar line of reasoning, it is hypothesized that the per cent of the population that is

Hispanic will be relatively high in counties where mobilization occurred, and will have increased over the prior ten years, more so than in counties that did not mobilize. These two variables, the percentage of Hispanics in each county and the change in that percentage the ten years prior to 2010, attempt to measure whether possible pools of immigrants, or changes in these possible pools over time, will increase the probability of TPM mobilization. As discussed, immigration was not the primary concern of the TPM, but was still part of their platform.

One of the main pieces of legislation that the TPM expressed anger over was one that assisted individuals who could not afford their mortgages, as well as banks who had backed those mort-gages. The TPM felt that this legislation was not only fiscally unsound, but unfair to individuals who were able to afford their homes. Therefore, those who owned the home in which they lived were probably more likely to be against the legislation and more open to the TPM message. In addition, counties where rates of home ownership rose, or at least remained stable, also were more likely to have larger populations of individuals who would support the TPM. Based on this, measures of the percentages of housing units in a county owned by their occupant, and the change in that percentage over time, were collected. It is hypothesized that counties with higher rates of home ownership are more likely to be mobilized when compared to counties with lower proportions of home ownership.

In the final measures of PDT, political representation is measured based on the percentage of congressional representatives who voted against legislation that the TPM actively protested against, or repeatedly mentioned as a catalyst for the formation of the TPM. In all, four such pieces of legislation were used (H.R. 1424, H.R. 3221, H.R. 1, and H.R. 3590). Two variables were created, one measuring the percentage of congresspersons elected to the House of Repre-sentatives who voted with TPM interests and one measuring the percentage of Senators who voted with TPM interests. For both variables, counties were coded between 0 and 100, where 0 meant that TPM interests were not represented at all and a 100 meant the TPM interests were represented all of the time. When counties had multiple representatives in the House, the voting records were averaged.[6] Data for these variables was collected at http://www.govtrack.us/. It is hypothesized that the probability of a TPM event occurring will increase in counties where TPM supporters have more political representation as there is a larger pool of individuals available to both support the TPM and attend events.

Data on two control variables were collected. It is expected that counties where state capitals are located will have a higher probability of mobilization because of the symbolic nature of the location. Due to this, it is also expected that counties adjacent to capital counties could have lower odds of mobilization as organizers in these counties might find it worthwhile to travel to state centers of government that are representative of large government and overspending. To capture this, the driving distance between a county seat and the state capital was calculated. Counties closer to a state capital should have a lower probability of hosting an event. Finally, population density information from the U.S. census estimates and projections database was

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[6]Congressional districts and county borders do not always match. In cases where multiple congressional districts were represented within one county, an average of House voting behaviors were assigned to that county. For example, if a county housed two congressional districts and one Representative voted for a bill and one representative voted against a bill, this was averaged.

introduced into the model to control for the impact of county size and population. All things being equal, it is expected that the more people who live in a county and the closer together that they live, the greater the probability that there will be individuals who live in the county that would both support the TPM and travel to an event. For the analysis, bivariate statistics were run to examine the relationships between the outcome variable and each of the predictors. Next, a logistic regression model was also run to determine whether PDT significantly predicts TPM mobilization—operationalized as whether an event occurred within a county on April 15, 2010.

RESULTS

Table 3 reports on independent samples t-test results that show the bivariate relationship between the outcome variable and the continuous predictor variables. On the bivariate level, the average for each predictor was significantly different between the counties that had evidence of TPM mobilization and those that did not, although not always in the way hypothesized. Based on PDT, it was expected that attributes related to TPM supporters would be significantly higher in counties with TPM events. However, this was not true for the percent of white non-Hispanics,

TABLE 3
Bivariate Relationships Between Predictor Variables & TPM Mobilization ($N = 3,108$)

| Predictor Variables | Mobilized | |
Attributes of Tea Party Supporters	Yes	No
% White Non-Hispanic	74.2	79.2***
% Voting Republican 2008	52.1	58.0***
% Over 45 Years of Age	40.9	42.6***
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	21.6	15.3***
Household Median Income (10,000)	4.1	3.5***
% Unemployment Rate	10.4	10.9**
Power Devaluation Measurements		
% Population Uninsured Under 19 Years of Age	11.2	11.8*
Property Tax as a % of Home Value	1.1	1.5***
% Change in Property Tax as a % of Home Value	−9.6	−5.7***
% Hispanic Population	10.5	7.2***
% Change in Hispanic Population	39.1	33.0***
% of Housing Units Owned	62.5	63.8***
% Change in % of Housing Units Owned	0.3	0.1***
% Congresspersons Representing TP Interests	45.8	38.3***
% Senators Representing TP Interests	71.2	63.3***
Controls		
Miles to State Capital Logged	4.5	4.7***
Population Density Logged	5.1	3.5***

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

TABLE 4
Logistic Regression Predicting Tea Party Mobilization ($N = 3{,}108$)

Attributes of Tea Party Supporters	Exp(B)	S.E.
% White Non-Hispanic	0.996	(.005)
% Voting Republican 2008	1.020	(.006)**
% Over 45 Years of Age	1.010	(.012)
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	1.048	(.010)***
Household Median Income (10,000)	0.682	(.099)***
% Unemployment Rate	0.988	(.014)
Power Devaluation Measurements		
% Population Uninsured Under 19 Years of Age	0.982	(.016)
Property Tax as a % of Home Value	0.266	(.210)***
% Change in Property Tax as % of Home Value	1.019	(.005)***
% Hispanic Population	1.026	(.006)***
% Change in Hispanic Population	1.001	(.001)
% of Housing Units Owned	0.995	(.008)
% Change in % of Housing Units Owned	1.129	(.074)
% Congresspersons Representing TP Interests	1.001	(.002)
% Senators Representing TP Interests	1.008	(.003)**
Controls		
Miles to State Capital (Logged)	1.027	(.053)
Population Density (Logged)	1.705	(.047)***
	$X^2 = 621.7$***	

$^*p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

the percent voting Republican, and the percent over 45 years of age. For each of those predictors, their relative proportions were higher in counties that did not have a TPM event. That is to say that in counties with no evidence of TPM mobilization, there were significantly greater proportions of white non-Hispanics, Republican voters, and older individuals compared to the counties were events did occur. In support of PDT, mobilized counties had significantly higher median incomes, larger proportions of individuals with a college degree or higher, and slightly lower unemployment rates.

Looking at the power devaluation measurements that were significant in the directions hypothesized, we found that in mobilized counties the amount of insured individuals under 19 was higher, the average property tax as a percent of home value was significantly lower, and the percent change in the tax was also lower, not higher as predicted. In mobilized counties, the average size of the Hispanic population was larger and had grown more over the last ten years. Although significant, the differences between the percent of housing units owned, and the fluctuation in that number during the prior 10 years, were not substantial. Also supporting PDT at the bivariate level is the finding that federal representatives from both the House and the Senate more often supported TPM interests in Congress in counties that mobilized. For the controls, the distance between the capital of the state and the county seat was significant, with mobilized counties being closer to the capital on average. Mobilized counties also had significantly larger population densities than counties that did not mobilize.

The results of the logistic regression reported in Table 4 offered partial support for PDT as eight of the 17 predictors were significant.[7,8] When controlling for the impact of all the other variables in the model, and examining those related to attributes of TPM supporters, two variables were significant in the direction hypothesized, while one was significant in the opposite direction hypothesized. Each unit increase in the per cent of individuals voting for Senator John McCain in the 2008 presidential election increased the probability of TPM mobilization by two per cent. Also, each unit increase in the percentage of individuals whose educational attainment was a bachelor's degree or higher increased the odds of a TPM event by 4.8%. The final significant predictor variable related to the attributes of TPM supporters was the average household median income in the county. When controlling for the impact of all other variables in the model, every $10,000 increase in the household median income actually decreased the odds of a county being mobilized by 31.8%.

For the PDT measurements, four predictor variables were significant in the direction hypothesized, including the taxation variables. Specifically, the odds of mobilization decreased by 73.4% for every percent increase in the property tax rate, while relative increases over the last ten years increased the odds of mobilization by 1.9% for every unit increase in the tax rate. Also, the percent of Senators representing TPM interests was significant, where increases in senatorial support increased the odds of mobilization. Increases in the percent Hispanic increased the odds of mobilization. For every percent increase in the percent of the population that was Hispanic, the odds of TPM mobilization increased by 2.6%. Finally, increases in the county's population density significantly increased the odds of a TPM event occurring on April 15, 2010, while the distance from the state capital did not.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our analysis offers partial support for PDT. In line with PDT, the odds of a TPM event occurring in a county increased as the percent of Republican voters and individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher increased. Larger pools of potential TPM supporters meant a greater likelihood of mobilization. However, larger median incomes in a county meant a decreased likelihood of mobilization. Interestingly, the populations of white non-Hispanics, individuals older than 45, and the unemployment rate had no significant impact on mobilization. As polling and survey

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[7]Multicollinearity was checked using variance inflation factors. All values were between 1 and 4, indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue.

[8]An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model and a spatial lag maximum likelihood regression model were run in geographic information systems software. Please note though that because a spatial lag model was designed for a continuous level dependent variable, we ran these models only to investigate if spatial autocorrelation is a potential issue. The spatially lagged dependent variable in the spatial lag model was significant, meaning that whether a TP event occurred in a county co-varies with whether an event occurred in nearby counties. Also, the log likelihood was slightly smaller in the spatial lag model, meaning that model was a better fit. When comparing the spatial lag model to the final logistic regression model, although their coefficients were in the same direction, the p-vales for three variables changed enough to alter their significance. Specifically, property tax as a percent of home value, which was significant in the logistic regression, was not significant in the spatial lag model. Percent of housing units owned and change in the percent of housing units owned, which were not significant in the logistic regression, were significant in the spatial lag model. Again, since the basic assumptions of the spatial lag model were not met, these models are meant only to demonstrate that caution should be utilized in interpreting the logistic regression models and that spatial autocorrelation may be an issue.

data have shown that TPM supporters disproportionately come from those populations, PDT predicts that larger pools of these populations should translate into a greater likelihood of mobilization. This, however, was not necessarily the case, even at the bivariate level.

For our power devaluation measures, property tax rates and changes in those tax rates predicted mobilization in the direction hypothesized. So did the percent Hispanic and the percent of congressional representation on TPM-related issues. This finding is not surprising considering the history and platform of the TPM. The movement adopts its name from an historical act that protested taxation, and many TPM issues are based around fiscal policy. The date we measured mobilization was symbolic of taxation. Based on this, the anti-tax frame should have been the most salient and mobilizing of all the frames discussed. It is also not surprising that only one variable measuring Hispanic populations as a form of power devaluation was significant, given the lack of universal focus on immigration issues during this time period.

However, increases in Hispanic populations, which increase the odds of mobilization, also support alternative backlash explanations. The political competition model, for instance, contends that increased successes by minority groups' could lead to the creation of backlash movements (Blalock 1967; Freilich et al. 2015; Koopmans 1996; McVeigh and Sikkink 2001; Tolnay and Beck 1995; Soule and Van Dyke 1999; Van Dyke, Soule, and Widom 2001). Gibson's (1994) cultural thesis, one specific version on this framework, argues that along with other factors, the rising numbers of migrants from underdeveloped nations led some American whites in the 1970s and 1980s to conclude that their power was decreasing (see also Blanchard and Prewitt 1993). Some of them turned into a paramilitary subculture that shares some of the TPM's beliefs (Blanchard 1994; Blanchard and Prewitt 1993; Clarke 1987; Stern 2003).

The non-significant impact of the percentage of housing units owned by its occupants, however, deserves further discussion. Anger at the fiscal cost of the mortgage bailout permeated TPM events and rhetoric during the first year of its existence. Due to the framing of this issue, PDT predicts that areas with more individuals who own their own homes, and thus did not need help with mortgage foreclosures, will provide more support for the TPM platform. These individuals are angry with the federal government for subsidizing banks and individuals who either owned or defaulted on mortgages. This may not have been significant in our analysis for several reasons. Although many individuals had already foreclosed on their homes by the time legislation was passed to address the subprime mortgage crisis, some proportion of individuals that lived in and owned their homes may have been threatened by a future foreclosure. Thus, these persons would have been assisted by the legislation and most likely would not have supported the TPM's stance that was against their self-interest. Therefore, the pool of individuals who owned their homes could represent both supporters and opponents of the TPM movement. Future research might focus on gathering additional data on the county level related to the number of foreclosures as a more accurate predictor of the odds of mobilization.

Political representation had mixed results. Although the percent of senatorial representation was significant, congresspersons voting in the House of Representatives was not. This could partially be an artifact of the reality that counties and congressional districts do not always line up. Although every attempt was made to allocate the proper proportion of congressional representation to each county based on voting records and district lines, the methodology did introduce error into the measure. This could have aided in the predictor being non-significant. Future research should find variables that measure potential political representation, but are not impacted by the mismatch of congressional districts and counties. It also could be explained by

differentials in political power between congresspersons elected to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The mixed results for the PDT variables might also speak to the role of ideology in mobilization. Regardless of whether power devaluation occurs, and is subsequently framed as an issue to right-wing groups, ideology has the potential to impact an individual or group's decision to mobilize. Whether my elected official represents my political stance or not may be relevant if my ideological beliefs dictate a response to what is occurring on a national level, independent of what actually is occurring in my community. In addition, as one anonymous reviewer keenly observed, the PDT variables in our model capture concrete attributes of power devaluation, not attributes that measure the perceptions of potential supporters. Short of a large-scale survey, this methodology is the only way to capture the theoretical constructs of PDT. However, the potential impact on the model must be noted. Measuring populations of potential TPM supporters is not the same as having a count of the actual number of TPM supporters. Nor is measuring the amount of taxation the same as measuring a person's perception of whether their tax liability is too high. This methodological necessity of translating perceptual measurements into concrete variables introduces error into the model and could explain the results of the study not in line with PDT. Similarly, it could explain why increases in the numbers of potential TPM supporters could not explain mobilization (e.g., percent white non-Hispanic and percent over 45 years of age).

This research demonstrates that PDT can benefit from theory refinement through a more systematic operationalization of the three types of status devaluation. For one, the status-based, economic, and political markets are not mutually exclusive, which may reduce the validity of our model specificity when creating and interpreting the statistical models. Also, there are many ways to measure these constructs, justifiable in their own right, based on theoretical interpretation and access to data. The open-ended nature of measuring PDT constructs makes the theory vulnerable to critiques related to the reliability and validity. For PDT to be a true theory of right-wing mobilization, a method for systematically operationalizing the constructs should be developed. This is a difficult task, as these constructs manifest themselves in varying ways during different periods in history.

Overall, our results provide partial support for PDT and offer avenues for future research. Importantly, this study is unique in its application of PDT to a modern right-wing movement. As research continues to test PDT on contemporary movements it may be necessary to refine PDT's causal model to account for specific findings inconsistent with its claims. Part of this might include incorporating aspects of other social movement theories. It also may be necessary for future studies to pay more attention to differentiating the three types of devaluation from each other. Relatedly, more attention should be paid to the indicators used to operationalize PDT's concepts to insure that they accurately capture the causal constructs. For this research, however, PDT produced a theoretically and statistically significant model that demonstrated that right-wing movements mobilize, at least partially, based on devaluation in their political, economic, and status-based power.

AUTHOR NOTES

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